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Seniors sought to assist sheriff's office

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The phones started ringing off the hook at the Oakland County Sheriff's Rochester Hills substation after Sheriff Mike Bouchard said he was looking for senior citizen volunteers.

Bouchard announced Friday that the substation will pilot a new program called Seniors in Policing. Senior citizens looking for a volunteer opportunity will be able to assist substation staff with various tasks, including administrative duties, greeting the public and community programs.

The substation's commander, Captain Mike Johnson, said at midday Monday that the station had already received 40 calls.

"We've had a great response," he said. "We have gotten calls from as far away as Dearborn."

Bouchard said the program is about doing more with less. Johnson said he's not aware of any staffing cuts coming, but with only two administrative assistants, "There are a couple of things that kind of went by the wayside in the past ... (that) aren't really getting done now because we've grown so much."

The substation on Barclay Circle next to 52-3 District Court is open to the public from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, with an officer assigned to handle walk-in traffic during those hours. Johnson said there's room for a volunteer to sit up front as well.

"This is more of a community outreach program," he said. "It's going to give some seniors an opportunity to know their police department, and give some seniors an opportunity to help out on a limited basis."

Volunteers must be 55 or older and undergo a background check. For more information, call Lt. Steve Jacobs at (248) 537-3503.

Bouchard also announced a second volunteer opportunity last Friday, this one for retired police detectives. The Cold Case Posse is a new unit hoping to recruit retired detectives who are willing to volunteer their time and expertise to solve criminal cases that have gone cold.

The CCP will review and investigate homicides and other major violent crimes with a goal of establishing new leads. To volunteer for the CCP, call Cheryl Irwin at (248) 858-4960.

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